

CONGRESSMAN LINCOLN DAVIS (TN-04)
HEARING STATEMENT

COMMITTEE ON SCIENCE
U.S. HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

H.R. 798, the Methamphetamine Remediation Research Act of 2005

Thursday, March 3, 2005
10:00 a.m.
2318 Rayburn House Office Building

Good morning. Thank you, Mr. Chairman and Ranking Member.

Just this week, CBS 60 Minutes ran a story about a health crisis that has become a major problem in many rural areas of our country. I would like to thank the Chairman, Ranking Member, Members of this Committee, and other colleagues for bringing this crisis to the forefront of the national healthcare debate.

The crisis is methamphetamine. My State of Tennessee ranks third in the nation in the total number of meth clandestine incidents reported in 2004, according to the National Clandestine Laboratory Database. In fact, 75% of all the meth lab seizures in the Southeast are in Tennessee.

More than 1200 meth labs were seized in Tennessee in 2004. In my District alone, there are eight counties in which 20 or more meth labs each were found. One could argue that my District is the epicenter of Tennessee's meth crisis.

Methamphetamine destroys families and communities. It's cheap, easy to make, and highly addictive. It is deadly—and has been known to kill people who don't even use it.

So when we talk about meth we are not just talking about one drug and how it affects the user we are also talking about the health and well being of those living in the same environment on a daily basis. And more often than not they are children.

Meth is often produced in apartment buildings or other shared housing units. The chemicals used to make it are extremely toxic and flammable.

Nearly one in five labs is found because of fire or explosion. Then, when first responders arrive at the scene or workers come to reclaim the property, they are poisoned by the toxic chemicals in the air, on countertops, in the furniture, and everywhere else in the house.

No one has studied the health effects of meth cleanup, and there are no guidelines on how to even begin cleaning up a meth lab.

I believe that Mr. Gordon's bill, H.R. 798, provides a solid foundation to help address this issue.

Mr. Chairman and Ranking Member, Members of the Committee, I urge you to support this legislation.

Because somewhere, as we speak, methamphetamine is cooking. A match will be lit. An explosion will occur. A life will be lost.

Time is of the utmost importance, and we need to act now.

Thank you, Mr. Chairman. I yield back the balance of my time.